

RESOLUTION

Council of Graduate Students – University of Minnesota

Date: October 13, 2005

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Topic: Holding University of Minnesota Corporate Partners to Ethical Business Standards

Whereas the University of Minnesota enters into business deals with corporations involving financial contributions from the corporations to the University for which the corporations receive benefits (to be referred to hereafter as corporate partnerships);

Whereas partnerships with an institution as large as the University of Minnesota are beneficial to our corporate partners and only corporations whose business practices are consistent with our institutional ethical standards should be eligible to partner with the University;

Whereas the University of Minnesota is a member of the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), an organization that assists in the enforcement of codes of conduct for manufacturers of university-licensed apparel and other products;

Whereas the guidelines suggested by the WRC establish ethical standards with which manufacturers of member-universities apparel should comply to avoid potential revocation of university contracts;

Whereas the code of conduct used by WRC identifies the following areas of concern:

- a. Wage and benefits
- b. Working hours
- c. Overtime compensation
- d. Child labor
- e. Forced labor
- f. Health and safety
- g. Nondiscrimination
- h. Harassment or abuse
- i. Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- j. Women's rights

Whereas it would be consistent for the University of Minnesota to adopt standards for our corporate partners consistent with the standards used by the WRC in investigating manufacturers of University-licensed products;

Whereas the University of Minnesota can act as a positive force for change in the corporate realm by requiring our corporate partners to uphold certain ethical standards;

Be it resolved that COGS calls on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents and President Bruininks to take seriously the ethics of the business practices of corporations with which the University partners;

Be it further resolved that COGS calls on the University of Minnesota, with the guidance of the University Senate, to adopt a code of conduct for corporate partners that holds our partners (including their contractors, subcontractors or manufacturers) to ethical standards with regards to the issues outlined above in addition to environmental concerns;

Be it further resolved that, while the University of Minnesota should not be put in the position of acting as investigator of claims against corporate partners, if violations become public the University will commit to work with our corporate partners to achieve effective remediation;

Be it further resolved that while termination of a corporate partnership agreement due to violations of the University's ethical standards should not be the first response to a violation, it must be an action that the University of Minnesota is willing to take.